

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 AID-05
IO-13 ACDA-10 TRSE-00 /124 W
-----291019Z 020334 /13

R 281355Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2204
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 4388

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PFOR, IN
SUBJECT: ACTING PRESIDENT JATTI'S ADDRESS TO OPENING OF
PARLIAMENT

1. SUMMARY : IN A BRIEF ADDRESS TO THE JOINT HOUSES
OF PARLIAMENT THE MORNING OF MARCH 28, ACTING PRESIDENT
JATTI ECHOED THE PRINCIPAL THEMES OF THE JANATA
PARTY MANIFESTO: HE PROMISED THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT
WOULD RESTORE PERSONAL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES, IMPLEMENT A
VOLUNTARY FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM, AND REVIVE THE AGRICULTURAL
ECONOMY. ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HE REITERATED JANATA'S
COMMITMENT TO "GENUINE NON ALIGNMENT" AND SAID HE WAS
AD THAT INDIA WOULD HOST THE NAAC MEETING IN APRIL.
END SUMMARY.

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2. MR. JATTI SAID THAT THE GENERAL ELECTION HAD
"EFFECTIVELY AND DECISIVELY DEMONSTRATED THE POWER
OF THE PEOPLE, THE VITALITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
IN INDIA AND THE DEEP ROOT IT HAS TAKEN." IN LANGUAGE
REDOLENT OF CAMPAIGN ACCUSATIONS AGAINST MRS. GANDHI'S
GOVERNMENT, THE ACTING PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE PEOPLE HAD
GIVEN A CLEAR VERDICT IN FAVOR OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM,

DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW AND "AGAINST EXECUTIVE ARBITRARINESS, THE EMERGENCE OF A PERSONALITY CULT AND EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL CENTERS OF POWER." HE PROMISED THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT "TAKE THE PEOPLE FOR GRANTED OR ASSUME THAT THEY KNOW NOTHING AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ALONE KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS." THE NEED FOR SUCH AN ATTITUDE, HE EXPLAINED, HAS BEEN BROUGHT HOME BY THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST TWO YEARS DURING WHICH "MANY ATROCITIES WERE COMMITTED ON THE PEOPLE AND THEY HAD TO UNDERGO UNTOLD SUFFERINGS AND SOME HAVE EVEN DIED."

3. JATTI SAID THE MOST URGENT TASK WAS TO REMOVE THE REMAINING CURBS ON THE FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND CIVIL RIGHTS AND TO RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW AND THE RIGHTS OF A FREE PRESS. TOWARD THIS END HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD---

- REVIEW THE MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (MISA) WITH A VIEW TOWARD REPEALING IT, AND WOULD EXAMINE EXISTING LAWS TO STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC OFFENCES AND SECURITY WITHOUT DENYING THE RIGHT OF JUDICIAL APPEAL.

- INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT NO POLITICAL OR SOCIAL QIZATION IS BANNED "EXCEPT ON ADEQUATE GROUNDS AND AFTER INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL ENQUIRY."

- REPEAL THE PREVENTION OF PUBLICATION OF OBJECTIONAL MATTERS ACT AND RESTORE TO THE PRESS IMMUNITY IN REPORTING LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS.

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- REPEAL THE AMENDMENT TO THE ELECTORAL ACT WHICH PUT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS BEYOND THE SCRUTINY OF THE COURTS. THE GOVERNMENT, THE ACTING PRESIDENT SAID, WOULD ALSO MOVE TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO RESTORE THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND PARLIAMENT AND BETWEEN THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS: IT WOULD ALSO BE AMENDED TO PREVENT THE ABUSE OF THE POWER TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

4. JATTI SAID THAT "NOTHING HAS AROUSED PUBLIC ANGER AND RESENTMENT SO MUCH AS THE MANNER" IN WHICH THE FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. SUCH IMPLMENTATION WAS A "MAJOR SET-BACK" TO THE PROGRAM WHICH IS "VITAL FOR THE WELFARE OF THE NATION." JATTI PROMISED THAT FAMILY PLANNING WOULD BE PURSUED VIGOROUSLY AS A "WHOLLY VOLUNTARY PROGRAM AND AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY" COVERING EDUCATION. HEALTH, MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE, FAMILY WELFARE, WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND NUTRITION.

5. IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE, JATTI SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS PLEDGED TO "THE REMOVAL OF DESTITUTION WITHIN A DEFINITE TIME-FRAME OF TEN YEARS." MR. JATTI SAID THAT THE "RELATIVE NEGLECT OF THE RURAL SECTOR" HAD LED TO DANGEROUS IMBALANCE IN THE ECONOMY RESULTING IN URBAN MIGRATION, UNFAIR AGRICULTURAL PRICES, AND INADEQUATE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO THE RURAL SECTOR. THE GOVERNMENT HE SAID WOULD PURSUE AN "EMPLOYMENT-ORIENTED STRATEGY" WITH PRIORITY GIVEN INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT, I.E. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AGRO-INDUSTRIES, SMALL AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES.

6. IN HIS BRIEF COMMENT ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS, THE ACTING PRESIDENT SAID THE GOVERNMENT "WILL HONOR ALL THE COMMITMENTS MADE BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT." IT STANDS, HE SAID, FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL OUR NEIGHBOURS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY AND RECIPROCITY AND WILL FOLLOW A PATH OF GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT." JATTI SAID THAT HE WAS GLAD THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS HOSTING THE NACC MEETING IN APRIL. THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WILL ALSO Z"GIVE VERY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO STRENGTHENING OF TIES AND ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION WITH ALL DEVELOPING NATIONS."SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, SPEECHES, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE04388
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770107-0183
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770316/aaaaaneq.tel
Line Count: 146
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 566ca1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2977283
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACTING PRESIDENT JATTI'S ADDRESS TO OPENING OF PARLIAMENT
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PFOR, IN, (JATTI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/566ca1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009